2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

IV. WHEN A MARRIED SON LIVES IN THE HOUSE OF HIS FATHER

a. Brothers living together.

Santals do not at once, when getting married, set up separate households; they stay in the house of the man's parents. If a man moves away to live in the house of his father-in-law, they blame him very much, and such a man will not afterwards get any share of the inheritance. Some people will, because they are annoyed beyond endurance, perform the final funeral ceremonies for such a son. Nowadays a few men will give them a share of the original property; but this is only a favour; formerly they had no right to this.

Until the father makes his sons set up separate households, they work together, eat together. The parents of the young men look upon their daughters-in-law as their own daughters. Among his sons the father will love the eldest son most, provided he is good, and the mother will love her youngest child most. The young men with their wives honour their uncles and aunts like their own parents, and these look upon them as their own children.

The father guides, instructs and tutors his sons, and the mother does the same with her daughters-in-law and daughters. The younger daughters-in-law address the elder daughters-in-law as elder sisters and obey their word like that of their mother-in-law; the elder daughters-in-law address the younger ones, saying "girl" to them, and look upon them as younger sisters. When the parents have lost their strength, the eldest son and the eldest daughter-in-law manage the household, and they have to stand up when the young ones misbehave or commit any fault. If the elder ones while living let the younger ones manage, awful quarrelings arise. The old man mostly scolds his wife if the work and business don't go well, and now and then he will also upbraid his sons, but never his daughters-in-law. Those who really start quarrels, are the mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, and the wives of the brothers, and through their quarrels brothers also become enemies. Santals say: "A mother-in-law, a bitter pumpkin, not tasty"; "a daughter-in-law, plugged ears, they don't hear"; "a daughter-in-law, a python snake, dragging themselves along, they do not move". Of the husbands of daughters they say: "A daughter's husband, crooked firewood, will be still more crooked"; "Another's child, a forest fowl, they will not become one's own".

An elder brother's wife and the younger brothers and sisters of her husband are great friends; they do not quarrel. Girls tell the wife of their elder brother everything, both

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4.6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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614 Thus theoretically speaking at least, each of its group is exogamous as far as its own group is concerned, but endogamous in relation to the other groups, who are *Bòndhus*, subject to a variety of other restrictions, as we shall soon see in detail.
[174] Broadly speaking, this arrangement points to the existence of a dual division among the Santals in the past for matrimonial purposes.

It may be noted here that the various Santal clans have their own *gadi* (original seats). If it so chances that a Santal finds his own *gadi*, the same with that of others, his attraction is stronger towards his clan-group than to his other relatives, however near they may be. Thus there is a solid tie among the
[783] *Jàtià Peras* (friends of the same blood) belonging
[784] to the same clan, all of whose members undergo ceremonial pollution on the death of one of the
[671] clan. Thus clan-ties amongst Santals transcend even degrees of relationship.

[428] The son inherits the clan-name of his father
[691] and lives with his father as of right. The father
[611] is the natural guardian of the children, and the way in which descent is reckoned is patrilineal. The
[562] Santal wife has no legal status in the eye of tribal jurisprudence; she is simply bought and belongs to the husband's family as a chattel. And the type
[594] of family that centres round the father as the head, may be characterised as patripotestal.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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to wifehood with the man of her choice, the mere sticking of a flower in the knob of her hair, as in the *Sanga* marriage, being considered sufficient. 587 583

IV MINOR MARRIAGES

Added to these, there are various minor forms of marriage amongst the Santals. 583

(1) Golanṭi or Golaneṭi[1].

Such marriages, mentioned by Dr. Campbell, take place when two families each having a marriageable son and a daughter, each marries his daughter to the other's son. This is a convenient form of marriage and, as a rule, presents are dispensed with.

(2) Ghàrde Janwane.

This is a form of marriage, gone through when the father of a girl wants his daughter to live in his house even after her wedlock. No bride-price need be paid ; and the husband is expected to live with his father-in-law for five years in lieu of the payment. On the expiry of this term, he is at liberty to move freely, on the receipt of the present of a pair of bullocks, some food-stuff and some implements for agriculture. [591]

1. Ref. page 215, Dr. Campbell's *Santali to English Dictionary*.

596 and grandchildren, which is equivalent to the Hindu "Joint family". The Maori calls it "Whanau" (meaning extended family or family group) which corresponds to the German "Gross familie".

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[614] The family is broken up by marriage when the daughters by the law of exogamy go to another clan. Up to the time of their marriage the daughters are the property of their fathers or the nearest male relatives (if the father is dead), who take charge of them ; when married, they come under control of the family of their husbands (with these as their immediate lords and masters) and this they continue to be so long as there is any one who has a right over them. If such a state [734] ceases, they have no longer any locus standi ; they revert to their original relatives, if they are alive or become sort of guardianless minors, if none such exist they become utterly destitute except for what people may give them or what they may be able to earn through their work. It can be seen that the sons sometimese stablish their own home, when they have got their own family. But ordinarily the sons with their wives live with their father and mother.

• 591 **Ghardi-Jawae:** There is a third type, in which
583 the son-in-law is taken as a son in the father-in-law's
606 family. If in a Santal family there is no son but only a daughter, they marry their daughter off and give the son-in-law the position of a son, provided he lives with his father-in-law. If in a family there are grown-up daughters and minor sons, the son-in-law works for his father-in-law without wages for five years. He then gets two buffaloes, some rice and some agricultural

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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implements, and sets up a house for himself and his wife. This sort of son-in-law is called Ghardi-jawae.

Family not Polyandrous: In the individual family the father is the *pater familias*, whereas in the other type the grandfather or any senior male member is head in every respect; other members, however senior they may be in age, must remain under his authority. In the Santal family all the brothers marry different wives (monogamous) which can be verified from the genealogical trees of the different Santal families. It is not like the normal Toda family which consists of a number of brothers—brothers with one wife, and each house belongs to a family of this kind and is handed on to the children of the brothers (Rivers' Toda, p. 559).

596 [594] 595 [171]

There are no different terms of kinship for the father, father's brother, as also for mother and father's brother's wife which would not have happened, if there had been polyandry—

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(Toda)	Father	... ...	In (aia).
,,	Father's brother	...	,,
,,	Mother	...	Av (ava)
,,	Father's brother's wife	...	,,

A consideration of terms of kinship of the Santals side by side with that of the Todas shows that the terminology of the Santals is cast in the same way as amongst the Todas. The terms for father and the father's brother are the same, the only difference being marked by the addition of descriptive words like Gongo (elder) or Hopen (younger); so also the terms for

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4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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[601] the father's brother's wife and of the mother are the same, only modified by the addition of descriptive terms, younger and elder. This might argue in favour of the existence of polyandry amongst the Santals. But the constitution of the family is entirely different. Amongst the Santals as distinguished from the
595 Todas each brother has a separate wife who is
171 always recognised as the partner of that brother only
851 and does not belong to all the brothers as amongst the Todas. When the child is born, there is no question of any difficulty of identity of the biological father, who is bound by individual marriage ties to its mother. This is quite different amongst the Todas, where a sociological fatherhood has to be determined by the bow and arrow ceremony of generally the eldest brother in the family, when a woman is with child. This sociologically recognised father may be quite different and is often so from the real biological father. But amongst the Santals the sociological and biological father is always
• 591 the same except in cases of adultery. Amongst the
171 non-fraternally polyandrous Nairs again, there was a custom of several husbands visiting a common wife in turn and leaving shoes, etc., outside for prohibiting the entry of other husbands. There is no trace of any such custom nor any matriarchy amongst the Santals, which would have been necessary for such a system of
587 non-fraternal polyandry. True, there is the custom of the junior levirate by which the husband's younger brother has marital right over the elder brother's widow. But this marriage can only take place when the elder brother is dead and there is no question of the younger brother marrying the elder brother's wife while he is
000 alive. Though there is a joccse relationship between

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The organization which binds groups of villages together is loose by comparison with the village system. The Santals distinguish between the various sections of the country in which their villages are situated, calling them *parganas*. Each *pargana* has a distinctive name, which may be either the name of a village situated within its borders or a general name. Over each of the *parganas* a *parganath* is supposed to have jurisdiction. McAlpin's report, the result of an inquiry instituted by the Bengal Government which led to the Tenancy Amendment Act of 1918, in addition to its main purpose of suggesting measures for the protection of Santal lands, dealt also with the condition of the Santal village system. McAlpin reported that the *pargana* system was far gone in decay, and it is not possible to question his conclusion. Binu Hāsdāk' of Tantidanga, late *parganath* of the Sarenga area, was typical of his class. His mind was well stored with the customary law of the tribe, and from time to time he was called in by nearby villages to help more particularly with disputes arising out of marriage tangles. He was personally popular and had some prestige as the possessor of valuable remedies against sickness, but on his own confession his authority was of a very limited kind. "What can I do", he once said, "unless the people of the village are agreed?" There is the crux of the situation; in the village, public opinion is a wellnigh irresistible force. Binu used, nevertheless, to go happily about his errands, for among other advantages which accrued he received a fee amounting to one rupee four annas when a guilty party was fined.

Kinship ties share with the well-knit village system the governance of the Santal's daily life, regulating his relationships with his fellows. The tribe is divided into clans, and each clan is again divided into sub-clans. The clan descends through the father, and when girls marry they are taken into the clans of their husbands. The clans have a totemistic basis and they are exogamous. Land is conceived of as belonging to the clan. Although individual and family ownership is now the rule, Santals will not countenance the transfer of land from one clan to another. The one exception for which allowance is made has been forced on them by economic necessity; it occurs in the case of a man without sons who brings his daughter's husband into his own house to carry on the cultivation, the son-in-law thereby acquiring rights in the property for descendants. The rights conferred by Hindu personal law on daughters in the property of their fathers or on wives in the property of their

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587 amount. The man and the woman are seated on the ground facing each other. The man takes a flower in his hand, and applying the vermilion to the flower and not direct to the woman's head he places the flower in her hair. Afterwards he places on her arm the iron bangle. As one would expect, widowers are usually anxious to marry again as soon as possible, for they are greatly dependent on the help of the woman in the home and in their fields. In the spring of 1941 I was passing through a village in which a wedding was in progress between a widower and a girl who had been previously married and deserted by her husband. In that year marriages were scarce in the countryside because the previous year's rice crop had been a failure and not many could meet the expenses of a wedding. This bridegroom explained his position to me in these words: "I just had to be married again. My first wife was destroyed last year, and if I have no wife who will help [123] me in the fields? I cannot pay wages for labour." He pointed to the bride and asked me what I thought of her. My comments were, I hope, extremely tactful; he told me: "She is a very strong woman." Most of the women who contract a second marriage have been divorced. Although there is no bar to widow remarriage, widows do not often marry again. One reason is the [835] existence of a modified form of fraternal polyandry. A woman is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband's younger brother, and in the event of her husband's death it is his younger brother's duty to marry her. Even where the conditions are not favourable to such an arrangement, she is usually welcome to stay on in the home of her late husband. She probably does a good deal more than earn her own keep by her share in the work of the household, and where she has children they belong to the clan and family of her husband and make a bond between her and the rest of the family.

595 Cases of polygamy are rare. The most frequently recognized cause of a polygamous marriage is the absence of children by the first wife. Such a wife may be divorced or leave, but sometimes she prefers to remain with her husband, who takes another wife in order to beget children. The only case known to me where a man had three wives was exceptional in another way, for he was one of the few Santals of the area who was a prosperous landowner-cultivator. In all that has been said the assumption has been 591 made that the family is patrilocal. The only exception to this 583 rule arises when a man has no sons but has daughters. In this event one at least of the daughters remains at her own home after her marriage, and her husband, known as a "house son-in-

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law", comes to live there. This arrangement is common to all agricultural communities in Bengal. Among the Santals no bride price has to be paid, and in some instances the marriage ceremony is postponed till the end of a trial period during which the youth lives in the home of his future father-in-law and works for him without wages. He is accepted as the girl's husband when he is known to be a good worker, and thereby he also establishes his claim to receiving a portion of the land when his father-in-law dies. He does not change his clan, for this he cannot do, but he and his heirs can inherit from his wife's father. Hence this form of marriage furnishes the only exception to the rule that land must not pass out of the possession of the clan.

The term for divorce comes from the symbolic act that accompanies it. It is *sakam orec'*, or "leaf tearing". There are two sufficient reasons for a man to divorce his wife. The first is infidelity and the second is witchcraft. As marriage is a contract that involves two villages, representatives of both villages are summoned to sanction the divorce. The bride's father is compelled to return the bride price and the husband makes formal declaration of the divorce. He takes a *sarjom* leaf between his hands and tears it down the centre in token of the dissolution of the marriage tie. Then he has to provide a meal for those who have been summoned to the council. Owing to the fact that the bride price has to be repaid to the husband's family, the parents of the bride frequently object to the action, and where the guilt of the wife requires to be proved the proceedings may drag on for several months. If her parents can show that some blame attaches to the husband they can retain the bride price, and this they usually wish to do even when they do not desire their daughter to be reinstated in her husband's home. Until the bride price has been repaid the formal dissolution cannot take place.

A wife cannot formally divorce her husband, but she can, and sometimes does, refuse to continue to live with him. The problem of the runaway wife is one that is continually exercising the Santal village community, a fact that suggests the existence of many underlying strains. The mother-in-law is frequently blamed. In one family well known to me the wife of the younger son ran to her own home during the cultivation season in several successive years. At that time her presence was greatly needed to help with the fields, and she asserted her rights by running away. Her own explanation was that her mother-in-law made her work too hard and did not give her enough to eat. She remained with her own parents, who were not unwilling to feed